

P 281041Z FEB 88  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6425  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMCONSUL ADANA

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 01097

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PREL MOPS PGOV I2 TU  
SUBJECT: KURDISH INSURGENCY IN IRAQ AND TURKEY

¶1. (SECRET-ENTIRE TEXT)

¶2. SUMMARY: TRAINING CAMPS FOR PKK IN IRAN ARE A GROWING WORRY FOR TURKEY AND, ACCORDING TO TURKISH AMBASSADOR, HAVE BEEN A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION IN RECENT IRANIAN-TURKISH MEETINGS. BARZANI'S KDP, APPARENTLY IN SOME DISARRAY, HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO REIN IN THE PKK, WHICH HAS ACTIVELY BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH TALABANI'S PUK. THE TURKS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE DELIVERY OF WEAPONS TO PKK BY THE IRAQIS.  
END SUMMARY.

¶3. ACCORDING TO TURKISH AMBASSADOR KOKSAL, ONE OF THE TOP ITEMS ON THE AGENDA DURING THE IRANIAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR'S RECENT VISIT TO ANKARA WAS IRANIAN SUPPORT OF THE PKK INSURGENTS BY PROVIDING THEM TRAINING CAMPS IN IRAN AND BY ASSISTING THEM IN THEIR IRAQI SANCTUARIES. (ANOTHER TOP PRIORITY, KOKSAL SAID, WAS THE PROBLEM OF THE LARGE IRANIAN REFUGEE POPULATION.) IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR THE PKK IS A DEVELOPMENT THAT HAS ONLY BEEN NOTICED OVER THE PAST YEAR, AS THE IRANIAN EMPHASIS PREVIOUSLY WAS IN SUPPORTING FUNDAMENTALIST POLITICAL PARTIES IN TURKEY. THESE NEVER GARNERED SUFFICIENT POPULAR ENTHUSIASM, SO THE IRANIANS APPEAR TO BE TRYING A NEW TACTIC.

¶4. KOKSAL SAID THAT, DESPITE ASSURANCES TO TURKEY THAT IT WOULD NOT GIVE ANY AID TO THE PKK, ELEMENTS OF MASOUD BARZANI'S KURDISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF IRAQ HAVE BEEN AIDING THE PKK, EVEN AS OTHERS OF ITS ELEMENTS ARE BEING ATTACKED BY THE PKK. KOKSAL ATTRIBUTED THE PROBLEM TO MASOUD'S POOR CONTROL OVER HIS DISORGANIZED FORCES. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION, TURKISH DCM OKCUN OBSERVED THAT THE KDP HAS "FALLEN INTO SOME DISARRAY" FOLLOWING IDRIS BARZANI'S DEATH ONE YEAR AGO. MASOUD HAD APPARENTLY EVEN GIVEN THE ORDER TO KILL PKK INSURGENTS, IN CONFORMITY WITH HIS "UNDERSTANDING" WITH A TURKISH GENERAL IN COMMAND IN EASTERN TURKEY TO "SHUT OUT" THE PKK, BUT MASOUD "CANNOT DISCIPLINE HIS OWN PEOPLE."

¶5. OKCUN SAID THAT APO ACALAN (HEAD OF PKK, RESIDENT IN SYRIA) HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH JALAL TALABANI, HEAD OF THE PATRIOTIC UNION OF KURDISTAN (PUK), PRESUMABLY THROUGH SOME SYRIAN INTERMEDIATION AND IMPETUS. TALABANI IS SEEKING GREATER STATUS AS "THE PREEMINENT KURDISH LEADER" AND THUS WANTS THE PKK AS AN ALLY, BUT ONLY IF THE PKK BEHAVES ITSELF. ACCORDING TO OKCUN, TALABANI ALSO IS LOOKING TOWARD A TIME WHEN THE PKK WILL BE HELPFUL TO HIM IN MOVING AGAINST BARZANI. THE ELEMENTS OF THE TALABANI-ACALAN AGREEMENT SEEM TO BE:

-- CESSATION, FOR THE TIME BEING, OF PKK ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS,

-- CESSATION OF PKK ASSASSINATIONS OF OTHER KURDS, ESPECIALLY IN EUROPE,

-- TURNING AGAINST THE KDP IN FULL FORCE, BUT NOT UNTIL "THE TIME IS RIPE."

OKCUN OBSERVED THAT IT IS ODD THAT THE PKK IS CULTIVATING THE PUK, WHOSE TRADITIONAL AREA OF OPERATION IS AROUND SULAYMANIYYA AND NOT ALONG THE IRAQI-TURKISH BORDER WHICH IS KEY TO THE PKK, BUT HE ASSUMED THAT THE IMPORTANT FACTORS ARE ANGER AT MASOUD'S PRESSURE ON THE PKK AND MASOUD'S INCREASING LACK OF CONTROL WHICH ALLOWS THE PKK TO USE BASES IN KDP TERRITORY DESPITE ENMITY WITH MASOUD. OKCUN SAID THAT IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS, THERE HAS BEEN A MARKED DECREASE IN PKK ATTACKS, EVEN ON JANDARMA, AND HE GAVE CREDIT TO THE PUTATIVE ACALAN-TALABANI-SYRIAN AGREEMENT.

¶6. OKCUN ADDED THAT A NEW WORRISOME ELEMENT HAS EMERGED IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS: USE BY THE PKK OF NEW WEAPONRY OBTAINED FROM THE IRAQIS. THE TURKS, OKCUN SAID, HAVE TO ASSUME THAT THESE WEAPONS HAVE NOT BEEN CAPTURED, SINCE THEY ARE IN SERIAL SEQUENCE AND NEW. THE TURKS HAVE NOT RAISED THE ISSUE YET WITH THE IRAQIS, IN HOPES THAT IT WILL TURN OUT TO HAVE BEEN A LIMITED ARRANGEMENT.  
(ASKED WHY THE IRAQIS WOULD RISK HARMING ITS KEY RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY--AFTER ALL, NEITHER STATE IS BLESSED WITH AN OVERABUNDANCE OF FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS--OKCUN MUSED THAT "ALL THESE COUNTRIES"--SYRIA, IRAN, AND IRAQ--ARE ACCUSTOMED TO PUTTING ON PRESSURE THROUGH RUNDERHANDED, VIOLENT MEANS: "IT IS IN THEIR CHARACTER," WAS HIS VIEW.)

¶7. COMMENT: THE HISTORY OF KURDS, AT LEAST IN IRAQI KURDISTAN, IS THAT PPWE THEY ARE ALWAYS READY TO FIGHT NON-KURDISH OUTSIDERS THEY ALSO FREQUENTLY FIGHT EACH OTHER. THE CURRENT PKK-KDP SITUATION AND FREQUENT KDP-PUK FUEDS ILLUSTRATE THIS CONSTANT OF IRAQI KURDISH POLITICS.

NEWTON